

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIMA 07270 162314Z POSS DUPE
ACTION OES-09

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 AGR-01 EB-08 COME-00
IO-13 /047 W
-----111607 170556Z /12/13
R 152000Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1434

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CCY FOR GARBLE TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP PE
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS
-- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

RREF: STATE 197792

1. I REGRET THE INADVERTENT OVERSIGHT IN FAILING PREVIOUSLY
TO RESPOND TO THE REFTEL.

2. DURING THE LAST YEAR I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH VIRTUALLY
ALL THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GOP THE OBVIOUS AND PRESSING
NEED TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN PERU. THIS
THEME WAS MOST RECENTLY EMPHASIZED IN A LENGTHY CONVER-
SATION I HAD WITH MINISTER OF FINANCE SILVA RUETE ON
AUGUST 12. PERUVIANS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT, AND FROM
THE PRESIDENT ON DOWN, ARE WELL AWARE OF THE AGRICULTURAL
SECTOR'S POOR PERFORMANCE. AND ALL RECOGNIZE THAT MORE
RESOURCES MUST BE DEVOTED TO AGRICULTURE, THAT POLICIES
MUST BE REFORMED AND INCENTIVES INCREASED. BUT THE
COUNTRY'S PERILOUS FINANCIAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PROBLEMS
IN DEALING WITH LAND REFORM AND BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA HAVE
PROVED OBSTACLES IN GETTING MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS. WE
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ARE ENCOURAGED, HOWEVER, TO NOTE INCREASING INTEREST
HERE IN AGRICULTURE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AS ESSENTIAL TO
THE COUNTRY'S OVERALL DEVELOPMENT. USAID IS CURRENTLY
FINANCING A SERIES OF BASELINE STUDIES IN THE MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE THAT SHOULD PROVIDE HIGHLY USEFUL CHECK-
POINTS AND DATA FOR FUTURE PROGRAMS.

3. I FIND THAT PERUVIAN LEADERS ARE ALSO GENERALLY AWARE OF THE PROJECTED WORLDWIDE FOOD SHORTAGES. BUT THEIR CONCERN FOR PRODUCING MORE FOOD IS MORE CLOSELY TIED TO CURRENT PERUVIAN PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES, RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT AND INTERNAL MIGRATION. THE LEADERS HERE, PARTICULARLY INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT, UNDERSTAND TOO THAT UNCHECKED POPULATION GROWTH IS CLOSELY LINKED TO THE FOOD PROBLEM AND THREATENS THE COUNTRY'S RATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. BUT THEY BELIEVE THIS MUST BE TREATED WITH GREAT CAUTION BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES.

4. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENGAGE GENERAL CHAVEZ QUELLOPENA, HEAD OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING INSTITUTE, IN DISCUSSION ON POPULATION. SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WE MET WITH KEY MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF FOR AN INFORMAL TALK ON THE SUBJECT. THERE ARE NOW SIGNS OF MOVEMENT ON THIS FRONT. IT APPEARS THAT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IS ABOUT TO OFFER FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES ON A MODEST SCALE IN MINISTRY INSTALLATIONS. THERE IS TO BE NO PUBLICITY BUT WE EXPECT A GRADUAL EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM IF NO SERIOUS POLITICAL ATTACKS ON IT OCCUR. I PLAN TO CONTINUE USING CAUTION IN INTRODUCING THIS THEME IN MY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT BUT WILL ENDEAVOR TO MAKE SURE THAT THE LINK BETWEEN POPULATION AND FOOD IS NOT FORGOTTEN. SHLAUDEMAN
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, REPORTS, POPULATION GROWTH RATE, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LIMA07270
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780356-0574, D780334-0814
Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780864/aaaacavq.tel
Line Count: 94
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6a058663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 197792
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1738172
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL PROBLEMS -- POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION RREF: STATE 197792
TAGS: SPOP, PE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6a058663-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014